GOAL TWO

Maintain core business processes to reduce the risk of potential disruption to critical services.

STRATEGIES

- Develop contingency plans for the effective continuation of services in the event of a disaster.
- Plan for the obsolescence of existing systems.
- Retain and train technology staff and knowledgeable workers.

In 1997 Grand Forks, North Dakota, experienced a horrific natural disaster with a flood and a fire. On September 11, 2001, our country experienced a terrorist attack that made us reevaluate our priorities. These two examples show the importance of disaster planning and also demonstrate the vital role that communication technology can play in the recovery period. Government businesses processes have become so dependent on technology that many of these processes would not function without access to the underlying systems and data. Arrest warrant systems, check writing systems, e-mail, telephone and Internet access are all examples of critical systems that are vital to ongoing operations. The state also has a major responsibility for coordinating a response in the event of a disaster. Proactive planning for catastrophic events is essential. This includes having systems in place to respond to a disaster, and restoring information quickly and efficiently.

Service may also be disrupted because of incompatible equipment and software, or the failure of hard-to-maintain, obsolete systems. Technology changes at a rapid rate and we need to plan for its obsolescence. Just as buildings and roads need to be maintained and replaced, so too the maintenance and replacement of technology investments needs to be planned and budgeted. The risk of postponing the replacement of obsolescent systems can be as disastrous as any other catastrophic event. Agencies have identified the replacement of critical systems in their technology plans and the state will need to prioritize the investment needed to replace these systems.

Maintaining the technology to support core government business processes also depends on having well-trained, experienced people. Workforce shortages in the area of technology continue to put pressure on the state to find and retain qualified staff. The state must continue to provide adequate training to update skills as technology changes. Having highly trained staff available to support and maintain the technology is a critical factor in minimizing service disruptions and down time.